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Newfoundland Labrador

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Women Pursue Skilled Trades Careers in Record Numbers

The message is being heard – women can find success in skilled trades programs and are signing up to take full advantage of new opportunities in the skilled trades sector. Since 2004, the number of women registering for apprenticeship programs in non-traditional trades is up by 35 per cent.

"I am so pleased to see these numbers on the rise," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education and Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. "I have made it a priority to ensure as a government, we take all necessary steps to break down barriers in the skilled trades, a sector traditionally dominated by men. There are all kinds of training and programs that appeal to women who want a dynamic, well-paid career in the trades and it is encouraging that we are seeing real progress in this area."

Several new initiatives introduced in recent years are having a direct impact on the number of women entering skilled trades programming. For example, each year, 66 per cent of the Alberta Centennial Scholarships are provided to women registered in apprenticeship training. As well, the Department of Education is involved in the second year of a contract with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to promote the electrical field to females.

In November, Minister Burke launched a promotional campaign aimed primarily at junior high females that encourages them to register for one or more courses in the *Futures in Skilled Trades and Technology* high school program. The Williams Government is investing $11 million over a five-year period to bring eight new skilled trades courses and state-of-the-art industrial equipment to high schools.

The Provincial Government has been actively working with natural and energy resource-based companies to ensure that women's employment plans are created for all resource development in Newfoundland and Labrador. As a result, companies are listening and women are being employed.

Partnerships with organizations such as the Women in Resource Development Committee (WRDC), and programs such as Techsploration continue to help the Provincial Government reach women from across Newfoundland and Labrador and spread the message that occupations in trades and technology are open to women everywhere.

Anne Marie Anonsen, executive director of the Women in Resource Development Committee, said, "WRDC has been working hard to promote the participation of women in the natural resource sector. Now more than ever, there is a growing opportunity for women in industrial trades, recognition that women make good electricians, welders, carpenters and pipe-fitters and that hiring women makes good business sense."

Over the past two years, the Williams Government has allocated $43.6 million in the areas of apprenticeship, science and technology, programming, training and infrastructure. These investments have funded new programs at College of the North Atlantic, improved infrastructure and learning resources, and effectively doubled the number of seats for skilled trades programs at campuses throughout the province.

"We cannot hope to have the labour force in place to successfully complete upcoming mega-projects unless we tap into the skills and abilities of women in this province," said Minister Burke. "Clearly, with the number of females in skilled trades programming on the rise, the doors to the skilled trades

classroom are opening to women. I hope to see that number continue to rise in the months and years ahead."

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